

TRAINS OF THOUGHT by REV. SALLY TRAIN



A Gracious Welcome

An English professor in a Junior College always asks her students to identify any words they do not know when they begin reading a new book. They then develop a vocabulary list to work on. She was a bit surprised when the word “hymnal” appeared on the list. Few of her students knew the word.

I did my own quiet investigation by asking my daughter’s friends if they knew what a hymnal was. Most did not.

It occurred to me that when a visitor comes to our church and I invite them to “sing with me our opening hymn, number 123 in your hymnal,” they may think I am speaking a foreign language. We forget that the culture of church, like any other culture, has its own practices, traditions, and vocabulary. Those traditions also vary from church to church, especially the traditions surrounding communion. In some churches, only adults are allowed to take communion. In other churches,

only members are allowed to participate. It can be confusing to a visitor.

It was recently pointed out to me how helpful it is if someone in the church can sit with a visitor, graciously guide them through the worship service, and then walk them into the Community Room for Fellowship Hour. I understand that FCC used to have “Gregarious Greeters” who were assigned on Sundays to come a bit early and be available for just such an opportunity. The Board of Ministry discussed this and decided that everyone in our congregation is gracious and many are gregarious. We thought that if folks were made aware of the need, they would spontaneously step into the role when they see a visitor.



We did not see the need to formally assign people each Sunday. Our hope is that you will all think of yourselves as “Gregarious Greeters” and if you see a visitor, sit next to them and introduce yourself. It can make all the difference in making that person feel comfortable. After worship, ask them if they would like to receive information about future church events. If they say “yes,” write down their contact information in the Visitor Book.

Michael Meehan is currently putting the final touches on a church brochure which offers an introduction to our church. I plan to place copies

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in “Welcome Bags” which will also contain a gift candle, our Mission Brochure, and information about the United Church of Christ. Our Gregarious Greeter can then drop in current copies of our newsletter, the Tie, and the Upper Room Devotional booklet. Thus, our visitor will go home with a gift bag full of helpful information and prayer aids.

We are a church of radical and gracious welcome. Sometimes it is the small gestures and thoughtful details that make a person feel truly welcome and valued. Hospitality is an art. It is love made manifest.

Pastor Sally

OPINIONATED GARDENERS NEEDED

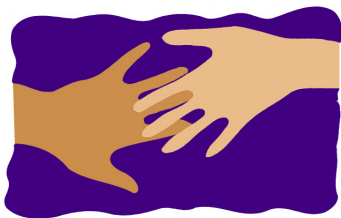
Pilgrim Park Apartments has offered to help us re-landscape our entrance, but wants us to come up with the ideas. They will get the plants, fix the irrigation, and bring in landscape materials we want, but Pilgrim Park wants the church to come up with the ideas and do the actual planting (isn't that really the fun part of gardening?).

Shall we make a rainforest, a succulent rock garden, a wildflower showcase, vegetable patch, a topiary extravaganza or? Got opinions? Contact the Trustees and/or David Knopf.



PRAYER PARTNERS

Please remember the following members of our church family in prayer. Pray for their welfare and growth in faith and discipleship.



January 27 - February 2

Cyndi and Chris Siroky, Brandon and Joshua

February 3 - 9

Deborah Smith

February 10 - 16

Annie Song-Hill

February 17 - 23

Hilary Spaulding and Bruce Weir

February 24 - March 2

Bob and Sue Spofford

Come and **Worship** **with us!**



February 3 Communion Sunday **Let the Good Times Roll**

In the Gospel According to John, Chapter 2, Jesus performs his first sign at a wedding in Cana where he turns water into wine. This story is only found in the Gospel According to John. This gospel is almost pure poetry and is full of symbolism. Pastor Sally will reflect on some of the deeper meanings in this joyful story. We will then share in our own symbolic feast of bread and juice.

February 10 Sinful Disciples

We will read two scripture passages: Isaiah 6: 1-8 and Luke 5: 1-11. In both passages, a person has an encounter with the Divine and the person's initial response is to withdraw due to an overwhelming sense of unworthiness. When confronted with perfection, we humans see so clearly our own imperfection. Yet God calls imperfect humans to do holy work. How do we answer the call? Pastor Sally will reflect on the mysteries of call, humility, and worthiness.

February 17 The Pursuit of Happiness

The Psalms is a collection of poems, prayers, and songs written over time that reflect the feelings and longings of a people living in relationship with the God of their understanding. Psalm 1 is an introduction to the book and prepares us to understand it at a deeper level. The first word in Psalm 1 is "Happy." That is no accident. Happiness is the theme and the goal. Join us in learning what this ancient passage has to teach us about the pursuit of happiness.

February 24 Guest Preacher - Rev. Ruth Sandberg

Pastor Sally will be on vacation in Oregon. We are privileged to have Rev. Sandberg lead worship and preach.

NEWS ABOUT KIDS



EVERY SUNDAY: 10-11:15 AM - Church School and Child Care

JANUARY 20, 2019 ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Sunday, January 20, 2019 the First Congregational Church of San Rafael held our annual meeting and a wonderful potluck afterwards. At the annual meeting, board and committee chairs went over the reports, discussed what happened in 2018 and looked forward to 2019.



After the review of the reports by the boards and committees, a budget for next year was presented. The budget for 2019, presented after much hard work by our Treasurer Caryl Hodges, is a tight budget, representing the challenges we will have for the next year. People are reminded that keeping up with our pledges this year will be critical, especially as we bring in a new called minister.

As in keeping with FCC San Rafael continued traditions of supporting missions outside of the church, the church voted to become an Immigrant Accompaniment Congregation. The resolution passed unanimously with 2 abstentions. The resolution is as follows:

In order to ensure fair and just treatment of all individuals, we resolve to declare First Congregational Church of San Rafael an Immigrant Accompaniment Congregation. Accompaniment is defined as providing support to families who have a loved one who is detained or in the process of being deported. We believe that the legal status of the person detained has no bearing on our compassionate ministry to help ensure that their loved ones have clothing, shelter, food, transportation and spiritual support.

We join allies and immigrants in opposing policies and actions designed to further subject individuals to unlawful deportation and the denial of due process. We will provide assistance to immigrant families in the form of Accompaniment, Advocacy and working with those involved in Networks of Protection.

Once again FCC San Rafael shows leadership in the community and in supporting fair and just treatment for all.

New church officers, boards, and committees were elected. The following is the slate of officers elected to the church council at the annual meeting. For information on all of board and committee members, see the annual report.

2019 Church Council

Moderator: Louis Frost
Vice Moderator: Michael Meehan
Treasurer: Caryl Hodges
Financial/Pledge Secretary: Michael Chan
Clerk/Recorder: Annie Song-Hill
Council-at-Large: Lynn Grant
Board of Ministry: Hilary Spaulding/Cathy Fuller
Board of Mission: Lucinda Ray
Board of Trustees: David Knopf
Golden Gate Representative: Lynn Grant

We look forward to 2019 being a great year for the church and for all, and are very thankful that we continue to have Rev. Sally Train to guide us during this transition. Blessings to all, Louis Frost, Moderator.

WALK THE TALK: AN INVITATION by Michael Meehan

At FCC San Rafael, we always say that we “walk the talk,” and I think we do a great job of that in most ways. Our church practices “radical welcome” where everyone who comes through our doors feels welcomed and loved. We are an “Open and Affirming” congregation and believe that “No matter where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” We also “walk the talk” through our mission work. Individually, our members help clothe, feed, seek justice, and house those less fortunate in our neighborhood locally and globally. As a congregation, we support numerous projects that help these people, just as Jesus taught us to. At our last Annual Meeting we also voted to be designated an “Immigrant Accompaniment Congregation,” which again reflects our belief that all of God’s children deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. In all these ways, I believe that our church is the manifestation of the church that God envisioned when He walked this Earth.



One of the ways that Jesus walked this Earth that I feel we often fall short of is inviting people to join us. When he was at the home of Mary and Martha, in the Gospel according to Luke, Martha was focused on serving others, and Jesus invited her to join him.

In the United States, church membership has been on the decline for several decades, and the people who study these trends attribute a lot of the decline to the belief that churches are too judgmental, and that they are not relevant to the modern world. That may be true of some churches, and even some very large

churches, but that is not the truth about our church. But how would anyone know that? We have a brilliant loving church, but we do not invite people into it in order for them to share in the love. Why is that? Is it because we don’t want to have to sit too close to someone in the pews? Is it that our church is so great, we want to keep it a secret? I don’t believe either of these are the reason. I think we don’t want to push our church on others, and I agree with that, but there are many people out there seeking a church home, and we need to be open to that need. I don’t suggest we go door to door to find new members, since I never appreciate someone knocking on my door to tell me about their church. (And I don’t think a single person who has knocked at my door wants me to join them after they know our family has two dads.)

What I am suggesting is that we need to each take a church brochure (or 5) and give them or send them to someone we know who may be looking for a church. Someone new to the neighborhood, or someone with kids who wants a church to raise them in. Anyone who might be interested.

In speaking with some of the newer members of this church, I learned that most of them found our church on-line, rather than being invited. I look around the pews, and I know that no one in the church was invited here by me, but why not invited my friends? The church is full of my friends, so why not invite more friends in?

Our church is a bright light in the Christian Community. Let’s not hide it under a basket - let’s invite people in to join us. I know that everyone who walks into our church will be welcomed with open arms, and will likely want to return, so let’s start inviting others. The more people who are in church on Sunday, the more love that there will be in the world throughout the week. Our country and world will only be healed by love, so let’s share the love.

SEARCH UPDATE

Our Search Committee is now reviewing profiles of candidates to be our settled pastor. Due to budgetary concerns, the Trustees have recommended and the Council has approved a reduction of the new pastor's time from 75% to 60%, or from 3/4th time to 3/5th time. (Our Interim Pastor Sally is currently 55%.)

As a result, we have revised and re-posted the Scope of Practice section of our Profile. Although we want the new pastor to be involved in several church initiatives, the amount of time to support these activities will be more limited. In the profile, we now emphasize that the pastor's role in initiatives is as a collaborative resource and that it will be up to the congregation to do the heavy lifting for new initiatives.



THE INTERIM PROCESS -- HERE ARE THE NEXT STEPS:

- ☒ We appoint an Interim Search Committee to locate and recommend an interim pastor
- ☒ We hire an Interim Pastor - **Rev. Sally Train began November 8.**
- ☒ We appoint a Search Committee -
**Megan Fuller, David Knopf, Alana Intrater, Anice Flesh,
Michael Meehan, Helen MacLam, Annie Song-Hill, Oak Dowling**
- ☒ We create our Church Profile, a description of our church to be read by potential pastors
- ☒ The Search Committee will consider all potential candidates
- ☐ The Search Committee will select possible candidates
- ☐ The Search Committee will interview these candidates
- ☐ One candidate will be recommended to the congregation
- ☐ The congregation will have an opportunity to meet the candidate
- ☐ We will vote on the recommended candidate
- ☐ We will join in worship to install our new pastor



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



BOARD OF MISSION MEETING FEBRUARY 17

We will have our first Board of Mission meeting of the new year on February 17 after worship, in the Oak Room. We will be welcoming new Board member Caran Cuneo. We will also be discussion the various mission activities for the upcoming year. All are welcome to attend,



Lest I Be Alone by Derek Dobson

Reach out and touch me O Lord
—That I may be filled with the strength to stand along.

Place your hand on my shoulder
—That I may feel your presence ever near.

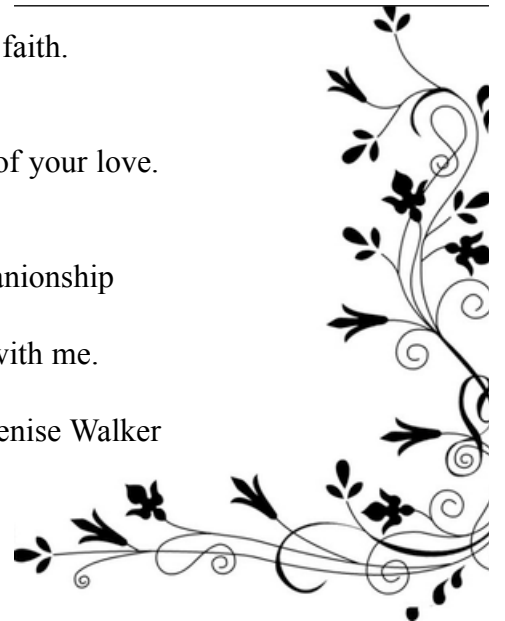
Cast your shadow over my life
—That I may have the courage to carry on.

Walk by my side at times of despair
—That I may hold the hand of faith.

Enter my heart when I am rejected
—That I may feel the warmth of your love.

Be with me when I feel alone
—That I may have your companionship
—For I know you are always with me.

Submitted by Denise Walker



MARCH 2 - WISE CONFERENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH

“When I learned that my son was living with bipolar and substance use disorder, I was so clueless. This was 31 years ago. Since then I have learned much. However, talking about mental illness in the church was just not a subject that was raised. It was stigmatizing and just downright misunderstood.”

These are the words of The Rev. Alan Johnson, chair of the UCC’s Mental Health Network. On March 2 the Network will host a WISE Conference on mental health in our Conference, at City of Refuge Church. This is the fourth time that MHN has hosted such a Conference and we are blessed that it is in our community this time. It is an opportunity for all of us in the church to spend time learning and talking about the important issue of mental illness and our role in supporting individuals and families affected.

I heard a quote recently that has stayed with me. Those of us who do not currently have a physical or mental illness are not able-bodied; we are temporarily able-bodied. Illness is a fact of life. Learning how to support one another in times of illness, physical or mental illness, is a gift not just to those we support but also a gift to us. It also is a way to build up resources and strength and support for when it is our time, or time for someone we love, to face illness.

Alan continues: “Over the years, I have taken educational programs offered by NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), read articles on the web, gone to conventions and conferences, and even attended support groups for those who are affected by mental illness/brain disorders. But even to this day, in many congregations the serious mental illnesses such as severe depression, schizophrenia, anxiety and panic attacks, eating disorders, and more have not been named in the prayers of the people, nor have many congregations held a Mental Health Sunday as so designated by the UCC. I believe that spirituality and faith can be resources in one’s recovering in mental illness and congregations can be contexts in which such resources can be helpful for those who are living with mental health challenges as well as their loved ones.”

This is our chance; our opportunity to learn and grow and be part of a ministry that we do not always recognize is a sacred part of the work we are called to do.

You can learn more at www.mhn-ucc.org. or register at: www.eventbrite.com/e/wise-congregations-for-mental-health-conference-march-2-2019-registration-53439851033

“Our goal is for our congregations to be Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged (WISE) about mental health for all who are affected. Please consider attending. All of us on the UCC Mental Health Network are volunteers offering this conference so that as I was clueless those years ago, now all of us can become aware and know how to take action.”

(Alan had been on the national staff of the UCC, 1979-1995, and retired as chaplain at The Children’s Hospital, Denver, 2006.)



MOVIE NIGHT FEBRUARY 22 - *NETWORK*

In 1976 it was nominated for 10 Oscars, including Best Picture. Forty-three years later, as a stage play starring Brian Cranston, it's today's hottest ticket on Broadway. It's Paddy Chayefsky's searing, but very funny, look at how TV news could devolve from journalism to populist rabble-rousing.

The late Peter Finch won the only posthumously-awarded Best Actor Oscar as Howard Beale, who gave America the news every night until he just couldn't take it any more and snapped. Faye Dunaway won Best Actress as the amoral programming exec who saw only ratings magic in putting "the mad prophet of the airwaves" on live every night. Ned Beatty was Oscar-nominated as the corporate chairman who shows Beale that millions of people being "Mad as Hell" is no match for REAL power.



Any resemblance to our current national lunacy is purely coincidental.

7 PM Friday February 22 In the De Haan Center at Pilgrim Park

What is fascinating about Paddy Chayefsky's Oscar-winning screenplay is how smoothly it shifts its gears . . . [early] The action at the network executive level aims for behind-the-scenes realism . . . [but, by] the final late-night meeting where the executives decide what to do about Howard Beale, we have entered the mad-house without noticing." Roger Ebert

You can view the trailer for *NETWORK* on the FCCSR website.



Thanks to Stephen Illich (See Genesis 6-8) 05-19-2007

WE WERE TOLD YOU WERE TAKING CREATURES
THAT CAME TO YOU IN PEARS



"MAYBE THE WHALES WOULD BE OK STAYING IN THE WATER."



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

6 — Ralph Sherer
11 — Samuel Dempsey
15 — Richard Walker
18 — Jasmin Morales
21 — Rev. Sally Train
25 — Rachael Knopf

GOLDEN GALS — February 12

The Golden Gals will meet on Tuesday, February 13, at 10 AM, at the home of Jean Nadell. Bring a bag lunch.



TIE DEADLINE for the March Issue - Monday, FEB. 25

The deadline for articles and news for the March 2019 issue of The TIE is Monday, February 25. Please have all articles for the February issue at the church office by Sunday, February 24. Or, email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Rev. Sally Train – *Interim Pastor*

Wednesday 10:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Phone (925) 216-9706

sallytrain@comcast.net

Amy Powers – *Office Manager*

Tuesday 11 AM- 2 PM


















Wednesday 9:30 AM - 2 PM

Thursday 9:30 AM - 2 PM

Office Phone: 415-479-2747

office@fccsanrafael.org

FCC Calendar February 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sa
27 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care	28	29	30	31 February 1		2 Groundhog Day
3 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care	4	5 Lincoln's Birthday 10 am  Golden Gate monthly meeting 	6	7 7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal	8	9
10 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 11:30 am EDFK Meeting	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday 10 am  Golden Gate monthly meeting 	13	14 Valentine's Day 7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal	15	16
17 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 11:30 am Board of Mission Meeting	18 President's Day 	19 7 am  Board of Trustees Meeting	20	21 7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal	22 7 pm  Movie Night 'Network' De Haan Center Pilgrim Park	23
24 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am Guest Preacher Rev Ruth Sandberg	25 5 pm  TIE Deadline for March 2019 Issue	26	27	28 7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal	1	2

This calendar is also available on the church's website in interactive form. There you can click on any event to see more details. Check it out at www.FccSanRafael.org.